

the moving van rumbling in at midnight
and next morning the house was empty
except for some sheet music and a shattered lamp.

Where did they go? Downhill, no doubt,
to the deeper South, to churches smaller and smaller,
further and further into the strip-mined hills.

These young men who still worried about their
complexions were simply not prepared for
the beauty in those choir robes, or the plight
of young women married forever whose husbands treated
them like dirt, or if they were lucky, like dust.

It must have been so exciting, those lips
that pronounced the o in God like the one in woe
whispering into the rectory carpet that they
loved her and everything about her and knowing
the both of them always knowing that somewhere
a van was idling ready to swoop down and take him away.

We began to joke about sin and how if all of it
in every church was brought to light it wouldn't
be safe to cross the street, so dense would be
the trucks. We laughed about men who got out
of the God-business but could never forget the thrill
and had to turn to strange practices, perched
in the cab saying, "Now step on the gas, Sweetheart.
That's what I really like."

Catholics, we reasoned, were the lucky ones: they
understood the near occasion of sin. They confessed
constantly and were forgiven. But we were not
Catholics and are not now anything at all, something
for which I am sometimes heartily sorry.

GIRL TALK

During "The Desires of Monique"
my friend and I were chatting about
the alarming number of men
who tore off Monique's flimsy panties
with their teeth.

The theatre was shrine-like --
vast, smoky and dim -- so we confessed
that neither of us had ever
chewed away any underwear.

We agreed, though, that perhaps age
and experience had a lot to do

with that. In the 50s there was something called a panty girdle and, believe me, after grawing on a panty girdle for awhile a person gets full and has to ask for a doggy bag to take home the rest for later.

On the screen Monique dreamed of her voracious lovers. There they were -- laughing, waving, flossing. This is where we came in, but leaving we vow that the first one to devour an entire pair will call the other immediately.

That is the kind of friends we are. We talk on the phone for hours and we tell each other everything.

"OBSESSED WITH SEX"

-- a critic

As if that's easy at my age.
And, anyway: I'll bet
if I stopped being obsessed
with sex for as little as 10
working days, my place in
this already over-crowded field
would be taken. I'd be forgotten
and the new guy, Don Crotch, Don Crotch,
would be in -- "Read the new
Crotch poems? 'Appetite
for life,' says the HoHo News
but obsessed, you know, with sex
like what's-his-name used to be."

RAPUNZEL

never had a postcard or a phone
call, just men in the shrubbery
yodeling up at her.

And once they arrived, no one
even looked at her outfit.
Just her you-know-what.